

William Harris Crawford to Andrew Jackson, March 8, 1816, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

SECRETARY CRAWFORD TO JACKSON.

Department of War, March 8, 1816.

Sir, Your letter of the 10th ulto. has been duly received. I presume Lieut. Gadsden has joined you long before this will be received.

Altho there is nothing in the state of our relations with Spain which ought to excite apprehensions of hostilities with that power, I think sound policy requires that a large portion of the troops under your command, should be concentrated in the South Western section of your division. This is the position which ought to be chosen with a view to any change of our relations with Spain, as well as to the employment of the troops in cutting a military road from the most convenient point upon Tennessee river to Mobile and New Orleans. This point is left to your selection. The point intersected by the southern angle of madison County, should be preferred, unless the inequalities of the ground thro' which it would have to be laid out, should render it objectionable. It is presumed that the artillery assigned to the Southern division will be sufficient to occupy the fortifications upon the Atlantic frontier. A regiment, or perhaps three battallions will be necessary to guard the posts upon the Upper Mississippi. This arrangement will enable you to concentrate at least three regiments of infantry, or of infantry and riflemen in the section proposed. You will, however, exercise your own discretion in determining the number of troops which shall be kept up the Mississippi. The employment of the troops in opening military roads, and in constructing fortifications, has been determined upon by the President, after due deliberation. It is believed to be no less necessary to the discipline, health and

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preservation of the troops, than useful to the public interest. Precise regulations will be adopted as to extra allowances which shall be granted in consideration of their constant employment on works of public utility. Any suggestions which you may think proper to communicate upon this subject will be received with attention.

The Cherokee deputation are now in the city, and feel much indisposed to the execution of the treaty with the Creeks proposed by our Commissioners. An examination of the various conventions which we have held with the Cherokees, will not permit the United States to insist upon the line contended for by our Commissioners. The same obstacle presents itself to the establishment of the Tom Bigby as the Western boundary of the Creek cession. These difficulties will make it necessary to form conventions with the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes. The President is determined to obtain no lands from either of those nations upon principles inconsistent with their ideas of justice and right. The difficulty with the Cherokees will not interfere with the military road from Tennessee to the gulf of Florida, as they propose to admit of any roads which the President shall direct to be opened.¹

¹ By the treaty of Fort Jackson the United States took the Creek lands west of the Coosa. Jackson, who made the treaty, claimed that the Creeks had owned the land in this region as far north as the Tennessee and as far west as the Tombigbee. It is true that Cherokees occupied a large tract of the land south of the Tennessee, but he held that it had only been lent to them by the Creeks. The Chickasaws and Choctaws claimed much of this region east of their own lands and were not willing to accept the Tombigbee as their eastern boundary. The Cherokees appealed to Washington and secured a treaty, Mar. 22, 1816, by which a strip of land fifty miles wide, from the Coosa to what is now the Mississippi line, was awarded to them. They were also promised \$25,500 to pay for damages by Tennessee militia during the recent war, in accordance with a report already made by the Cherokee agents.

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This treaty aroused the ire of Tennesseans and a vigorous protest went to the President from the citizens of Davidson County, Tennessee (*Am. St. Papers, Ind. Aff.*, II. 89). To adjust matters three commissioners were appointed, Jackson, Gen. David Meriwether, of Georgia, and Jesse Franklin, of North Carolina. They made a treaty with the Cherokees, Sept. 14, 1816, at the Chickasaw Council House, and another with the Chickasaws at the same place, Sept. 20, 1816, by which annuities were paid to the Indians and the desired lands ceded to the whites. The Choctaws yielded the desired boundaries in a treaty made by Gen. John Coffee, John Rhea, and Col. John McKee, commissioners, Oct. 24, 1816. Jackson resented bitterly Crawford's unwillingness to carry out the boundary arrangements in the treaty of Fort Jackson in accordance with the ideas of its author.

I have the honor to be,